Volume XCII No. 14 July 10, 1970 40 cents

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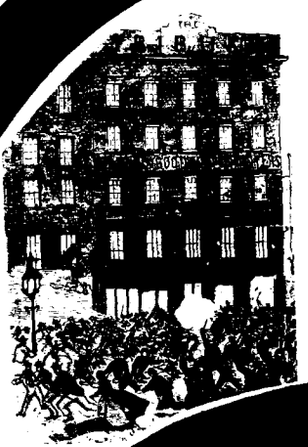

RACE, RIOTS, REPORTERS

Terry Ann Knopf

THE RETURN OF THE FELON

James Forest

IS AMERICA MORAL?

Richard J. Neuhaus

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APER NEWSP

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NEWS & VIEWS

Americans Bearing Gifts

There wasn't much doubt about Washington's 1967 arms embargo against Greece being a fiction. Just how complete a fiction, however, was left for Senator Vance Hartke to reveal.

Hartke contrasted the military aid figures for fiscal '69 with those of '66, and discovered aid to be twice what it was before the supposed embargo.

In 1966, $89.5 million in military aid was extended to Greece. In 1969, military equipment delivered to Greece, free of charge and at the expense of the American taxpayer, ballooned to $158.6 million.

In addition, the Greek government received $11.4 million in military sales, raising to $170 million the net worth of military equipment received in one year by Greece from the U. S.

Hartke is chagrined. "Our military aid to the dictatorial regime of Greece, condemned and censured by many of its European neighbors, seriously jeopardizes the cohesiveness and effectiveness of NATO, prohibits the opportunity for the rebirth of democracy in Greece, and mocks our democratic ideals and principles," said Hartke.

Hartke urged a cessation of all military assistance to the present discredited Greek regime, exclaiming that "ultimately the United States' position in the world will be determined more by our commitment and fidelity to our own democratic ideals than by the quantity of arms we send abroad."

This is the rationale, part of it at least, behind S-648, Hartke's rider to the Military Sales Act, seeking to stop all future military assistance to Greece.

The Hartke amendment is a meritorious one, but how far it will get is questionable. The issue of freedom in Greece is not a particularly pressing one in Washington. In fact, the only thing on Washington's mind at the moment in connection with Greece seems to be when and how to confirm officially what is in fact the case: the end of the embargo.

Nixon's 'Opinion' Polls

Most of those who wrote to the White House protesting the invasion of Combodia received a mimeographed apologia from Michael Collins, assistant secretary for public affairs at State, together with a State Department position paper replete with Nixonian clichés ("The question of who governs Cambodia is for the Cambodians to decide.").

But William A. Spurrier, chairman of the department of religion at Wesleyan University, didn't write; he phoned and said he wanted to record an opinion on Cambodia. The White House operator switched him to the appropriate desk, where a voice asked, "Which way ya' voting?" Spurrier replied, "I am against the President's policy." . . . No response; click; disconnect; buzz.

Piqued and suspicious, Spurrier called back, received the same inquiry and responded: "I'm in favor." The voice at the other end brightened: "Oh fine, and how many are in your family?—Four—well that's four votes then, right?"

The Poor Get Poorer

A new United Nations economic and social-planning survey of Latin America points up the affluence gap between that continent and ours.

The survey plumps for a crash program and a fixed investment of $35 billion, lifting the annual economic growth rate of the region to 7 percent by 1975. Its success would elevate the per capita income of the average Latin American to $530 a year!

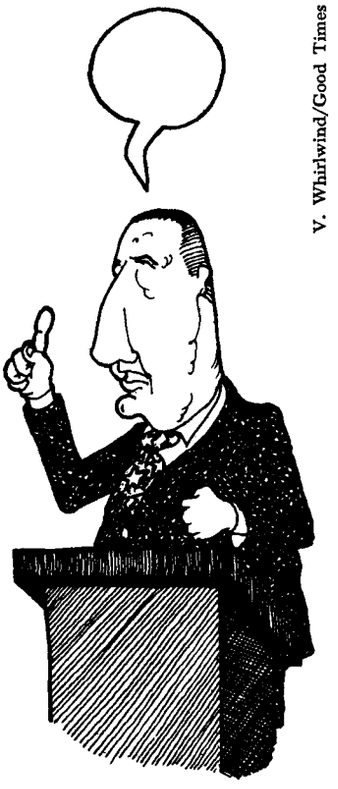
What about us? In 1968, the per capita income of the average America was $2,700. By the year 2000, it is expected to be at least $4,500.

Tom Lewis, Artist

Eighteen etchings by Thomas Lewis, a member of the Baltimore Four-Catonsville Nine presently in prison, are available for exhibition, free. The graphics deal with protest and prison life.

Interested schools or organizations with exhibit facilities may make showing arrangements by writing Mrs. Stasia Lewis through this column, *Commonweal*, 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y., 10016.

Lewis is co-author with Dan Berrigan of the new volume *Trial Poems* (Beacon, $17.50).



V. Whirlwind/Good Times

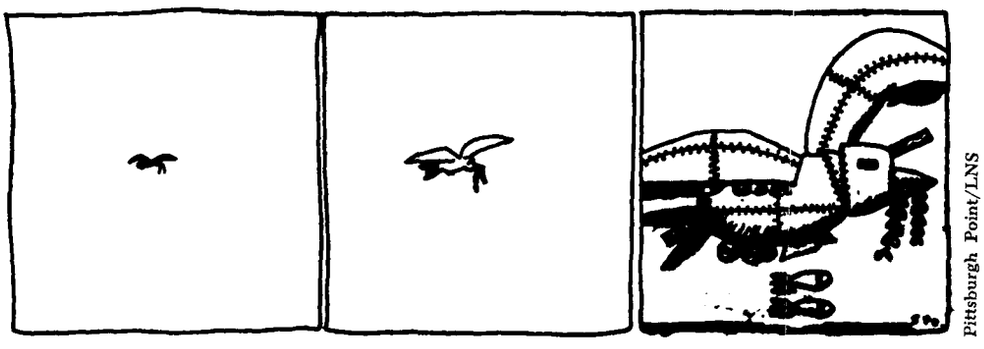
Odds and Ends

—Not very reassuring, that *New York Daily News* hero-image poll of high school and college students in the Bronx and Manhattan. It was quickly downhill from JFK to the astronauts, George Wallace, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and "the steelworkers (sic) who bearded Mayor Lindsay in his own bailiwick."

—SPIRO AGNEW: 'Dick, I don't understand the Church-Cooper Amendment. Explain it to me!'

RICHARD NIXON: 'It's very simple, Spiro. It means there are no Federal projects for Kentucky and Idaho.'

—Freedom has its special meaning among our Cambodian allies as well. Under Cambodian law, people caught listening to Radio Peking, Radio Hanoi, Vietcong radio, or to persons spreading false news, are liable to terms of 5 to 20 years . . . What's that about knowing yourself by the company you keep? JOHN DEEDY



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CORRESPONDENCE

A Kind Word

Flushing, N.Y.

To the Editors: As someone who contributes to *Commonweal,* I hesitate to comment on articles that appear in its pages. Nevertheless, two recent articles in one issue, that of June 12, graphically illustrate for me why the magazine occupies a unique place in journalism. The editorial on the hard-hats and the peace demonstrators is by far the most perceptive, honest and uncompromising I have read on the subject. It goes beyond the predictable responses of such competent journalists as Joe Flaherty and Pete Hamill who in their pieces were still much too defensive about their brother construction workers and totally unable to empathize with radical students. *Commonweal* provocatively captured the deeper implications of the hard hat mentality.

And Peter Steinfels' unmasking of Andrew Greeley's establishmentarianism was another notable service in a long list. The only thing I have come to expect of Steinfels is that rare journalist who is unhesitant to challenge myths and mythmakers no matter how fashionable, yet who is also willing to question his own assumptions.

MAURICE R. BERUBE

'Quarter Truths'

South Orange, N.J.

To the Editors: The State of Israel is the visible expression of the permanence of the Jewish people. Judaism in general and the State of Israel in particular are banners of God's fidelity. Christians not blind to the hand of God in today's history realize the importance of Israel for Jews, the Church, and all mankind.

If I read him correctly, Richard W. Fox, in his "Algeria, Israel, and the Al Fatah" [May 8], is not totally unaware of this, for he wishes "to insure the continued existence of the State of

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JAMES O'GARA: *Editor* JOHN DEEDY: *Managing Editor*
PETER STEINFELS: *Associate Editor* PHILIP NOBILE: *Assistant Editor*
MICHAEL NOVAK: *Associate Editor (At Large)* ANNE ROBERTSON: *Editorial Assistant*
GERALD WEALES: *Drama* PHILIP T. HARTUNG: *Movies* JOHN FANDEL: *Poetry*

EDWARD S. SKILLIN: *Publisher* JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

COMMONWEAL A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. Printed in the USA and published weekly, except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and June to mid-September by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016 MUrray Hill 3-2042. Copyright © 1970 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc. US and Canada, $12 a year. Foreign, $14. Single copies, 40¢

POLITICS AND MONEY

How can we make sure that the best and not simply the richest man has a chance to win an election for public office in America? There is no simple answer, but nearly everyone agrees that almost any change in the present system would be an improvement. Paradoxically enough, a special study committee set up by the Twentieth Century Fund recently conceded that the problem of financing House and Senate campaigns had reached crisis proportions but recommended nonetheless that no spending ceilings be established. The grounds for this position, simply enough, were that existing limits on Congressional campaign spending were unrealistically low (and hence widely evaded) but that higher ceilings would be impossible to enforce. Instead of a top limit placed on spending, then, the study group called for full and public disclosure of the source of all money given for House and Senate races in the interest of "honest and fair" campaigns. While not considering this suggestion ideal, the group did conclude that under present conditions spending limits were both unrealistic and unnecessary as long as the voting public learned without delay where the money was coming from.

Yet such a removal of limits on campaign spending leaves the obvious problem of the worthy candidate who lacks heavy financial backing. As the report noted, "With the exception of incumbents in 'safe' districts, successful candidates for Congress must either be wealthy or have access to large sums of money. Challengers without such resources do run for Congress. Most lose."

The recent New York Democratic primary offered a clear illustration of the problem. Leaving aside entirely the question of his merits, the winner of the Democratic Senatorial race was, according to the public opinion polls, unknown to two-thirds of the electorate outside his own district a few months ago. After many weeks of intensive and expensive TV advertising, however, paid for by an inherited family fortune, he won the nomination over three other men. But, lacking inherited fortunes, how much real chance did his opponents have, denied as they were equal access to the airwaves?

Contrast this state of affairs with the recent national election in Britain. In that key area of modern politicking, television, money is simply not a factor in British elections. In that country parties and candidates cannot buy TV time or advertising. Instead, each party is allotted a certain number of free periods for political use, depending on relative voter strength in the last election. Thus this time both the Conservative and Labor parties received equal time slots

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during the campaign, at no cost. Smaller parties were allowed a comparable amount of time. In the last Presidential election in this country, on the other hand, the ultimate victor, Richard M. Nixon, was able to lay out for this purpose almost exactly twice the amount spent by Hubert Humphrey—$12 million as opposed to $6 million.

A bill that has passed the Senate and remains to be acted on in the House tries to solve some of this large problem. The crippling "equal-time" provision, according to which the Prohibitionist party, say, must receive not a proportionate but as much time as the Democrats and Republicans, would be repealed. Added to this would be the establishment of a ceiling on expenditures, limiting Presidential candidates to spending on radio and TV not more than the equivalent of 7 cents per each voter in the last election, or about $5 million. Thus this measure would represent a beginning; however, it still does not go far enough. Given the gravity of the problem, Congress should bar political purchase of air time entirely and provide instead for specified amounts of free time for all parties, as in Britain. Such a move would with one step remove the worst of the money pressures now felt by all declared or potential Presidential candidates. Going further and determining how to apply this fairness principle to primary and local elections would be difficult, but this also should be attempted. The alternative is all too obvious. If decisive action is not taken, and soon, public office will to an increasing extent go not to the man of merit but to the highest bidder, and that would be a travesty on the democratic system.

PRESIDENTIAL PRAGMATICS

There were ironies in Richard Nixon's signing of the bill extending the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and lowering the voting age to 18. As late as last January, Mr. Nixon was prepared to jettison the 1965 civil rights measure in favor of a much more restrictive bill—one supported by the attorney general of Mississippi. However, by late June the 1965 Act had become so important to national policy that to have it he would reluctantly go along with a lowering of the voting age, a change Nixon had until lately championed.

The ironies of Nixon's being for the thing he had been against, and against the thing he had been for, are readily decipherable. The enfranchising of 18-year-olds is marvelous campaign oratory and flashy program objective, but as instant legislation—well, that's something else when one reflects that the vast majority of the 11-million youths being franchised is alienated from the Administration, and reflects also that two of the last three presidential elections were decided by a combined difference of 429,188 votes.

As for the shift on the Voting Rights Act, there is the fact that the jettisoning move ran into such formidable opposition in the Congress that to press ahead would have been to invite damaging and embarrassing confrontations.

Delayed Issue

This issue of *Commonweal* has been delayed due to a strike at the printing plant where the magazine is produced. We regret any inconvenience this has caused our readers. THE EDITORS

This was especially so with the senior Republican on the House Judiciary Committee, Representative William McCulloch of Ohio, opposing termination of the 1965 Act.

But there is likewise the fact that the political resurrection of George Wallace has necessitated some rethinking on points of Southern strategy. The protracted Alabama gubernatorial race provided all the education Richard Nixon needed that as President he cannot be against the same things George Wallace is against—and there's no mystery how George Wallace feels about the Voting Rights Act.

So Mr. Nixon embraces the Voting Rights Act, as he instructs the Justice Department to proceed with a challenge to the lowering of the voting age, on the alleged grounds that the latter is unconstitutional. Both actions are open to cynicism, yet Mr. Nixon acted as he should have. In this liberals especially can take heart, as it is the clearest evidence in some time that Nixon's pragmatic instincts are as multi-directional as before. In a way, it's reason for small, renewed hope in the Administration.

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Spanish Resistance Grows Bolder

There were 18 million visitors to Spain in 1969—two tourists for every three Spaniards—lured by golden beaches, scorching sun, cheap hotels and "such nice, friendly people." As a result of this enormous tourist boom, the Spanish economy is also booming. There are plenty of jobs in the service industries. Building in the tourist areas—virtually the whole southern coastline—is mushrooming. Because of the increased jobs and cash, consumer industries are also growing—to the delight of foreign investors. German television manufacturers and the Italian manufacturers of cars, washing machines and refrigerators have also brought great job expansion in the industrial centers of Madrid, Barcelona and Bilbao, as a result of which the building explosion has begun there too, particularly in Madrid. Where five years ago straggling shanty towns sprawled up the hills outside Barcelona and Bilbao, and spread over the desert plateau around the capital, there are now new suburbs, six-story brick blocks housing manual workers and lower-paid clerical workers.

There is usually a one-line ramshackle bus service between each suburb and the city center; and, because the new neighborhoods are unplanned, industry is not syn-

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chronized—it is common for workers to leave home at 6:30 a.m. and not return till 11 p.m. They are forced to work overtime by their work contracts since it is cheaper for an employer to pay a small group of workers overtime, and have them working flat out when necessary, than to have a work force large enough to cover all necessary jobs and then to risk their underemployment in slack periods. Because the new flats are sold, not rented, the financial commitment to obtain an ordinary flat is enormous. Often the whole family clubs together for one flat. The flats themselves compare very favorably with Council buildings in Britain. But the total lack of amenities, their isolation outside the city with poor transport, devoid of menfolk for 16 hours a day, totally cut off from the extended family which is still strong throughout Spain, make them barren places.

Not that all the shanty towns have disappeared. Rather they have been pushed out to a wider periphery. On the way to any of the new suburbs the road on either side is dotted with little hovels—corrugated iron shacks which don't look fit for a toolshed on a rural plot. I was told a story about one of the poorest shanty towns in Madrid called Palomeras. This Christmas when the center of the city was aglow with fairy lights, the city's electricity supply could not take the extra demand, so at 7 p.m. for the days around Christmas the lights went out in Palomeras. The people couldn't protest—all protest is illegal in Spain—but when one family was asked how they felt about this they said "In the village there were no lights at all, ever, and no water either; so here we're lucky, there's a fountain in the street and most of the year we have lights all evening."

It is against this backcloth of sudden relative prosperity for some, alongside a large residue (30 percent of the population in most regions) of appalling poverty, with 1.5 million workers employed outside the country, that Spain's current political and social turmoil must be considered. Officially nothing has changed; divorce is unheard of, the religion of the state is a brushed-up medieval form of Roman Catholicism, no rights of association, no rights of assembly, no right to publish, no right to strike, no political parties, nothing outside the tight control of Franco's government. At the same time the church, which has always had a tradition of missionary zeal—after all Spain is the cradle of the Jesuits, that most powerful and belligerent of Orders—is torn two ways.

Opus Dei—a lay religious organization with vows of poverty, chastity and obedience—is dedicated to invading and "Christianizing" every position of power in society. It has just acquired a majority of places in Franco's cabinet, deposing the traditional Falange. Their policies are "technocratic"—get Spain into the Common Market, get a high enough standard of living so that we can afford to give the workers and political activists their heads without risking an uprising, get our labor practices more in line with Italy's and France's so that Spain's international reputation will improve.

Their approach is wholly aristocratic. "Be a benign upper-class, but always upper class." They defend themselves, by describing their works of mercy among the poor. For example they set up a domestic science and catering institute to train girls who were going into domestic service, in the skills of their trade, "so that they would be better and more fulfilled in their vocation."

At the same time they set up an adjacent Conference Center for retreats, training courses, etc., for high-powered Opus Dei members, to prepare them for their task of invading the upper echelons of society. The Conference Center was a big success because it was cheap and well run. The maids—"the domestic science students"—did a year's practical work there before they got their diplomas. No pay of course.

At the other extreme some sections of the church felt that the only people who could Christianize the growing urban masses were the workers themselves. So the Jesuits, who from the time of St. Ignatius had had a lay arm called the Marian congregation (Sodality of Our Lady), trained a group of factory workers in Madrid in a commitment to bringing the Christian message to the "alienated masses." All this began 15 years ago. As the years went by, and the workers' group grew larger and stronger, the workers assumed all positions of leadership in their movement. At the same time they recognized that the Gospel is about brotherhood, love and justice.

This movement begun by the Jesuits is only one among several Christian groups of workers. And recently, student groups and clerical workers have joined the same commitment to social justice. Three years ago when illegal strikes and forbidden assemblies were beginning to give people the feeling that they could get somewhere, the Workers' Commissions were formed—a sort of underground union to fight all problems of injustice, whether in the factory or the neighborhood. Representing a broad front of Communists, Catholics and unattached sympathizers, they quickly became a mass movement, with demonstrations to free political prisoners, widespread strikes, mass leafleting and mass meetings. The police reacted with a show of force and a great deal of rough treatment. People arrested can be kept incommunicado for 72 hours and in special circumstances this can be extended. There were known cases of beatings. Young priests, particularly in Madrid, Barcelona and Asturias,

Summer Schedule

In keeping with the usual practice, *Commonweal* will again appear on alternate weeks during the summer months. Forthcoming issues will be dated July 24, August 7, August 21, September 4 and September 18. From then on we will resume our normal weekly publishing schedule.

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rebelled against bishops and supported the movement.

A massive repression followed: house searches in the middle of the night, the arrest of leaders, tougher measures against all gatherings and a general atmosphere of mistrust and fear, culminating in the declaration of a state of emergency and many arrests. In October 1968 over 1,000 people were arrested in one day in Madrid. At the same time the Paris-based "traditional" Communist Party used the Commissions for its political platform. Many people feel that these factors sapped the original vigor and unity of the Commissions and facilitated their destruction. They now only exist as a skeleton organization, largely out of touch with ordinary people.

But the movement has not just stopped. Resistance has taken other, more imaginative, forms. All the Catholic lay organizations committed to social, as well as religious renewal have founded an informal association called "Asambleas Cristianas." About once a month, slips are distributed (illegally) to announce a meeting at a certain church where, for example, "The People's Bishops" will be elected, or trade unionism and the strike in the coal mines will be discussed.

When Father Gamo, the now well-known Madrid priest who preached against the regime in one of his sermons and was arrested and sentenced to two-years' imprisonment, was on trial, 500 Christians gathered unannounced in the most crowded Mass of a parish. As the service ended one of the leaders walked up to the front and announced to priests and parishioners that they were beginning an all-night vigil in support of Father Gamo. The priests left. A short time later the police arrived. The people bolted the doors and continued sing-

The Return Of the Felon

No matter how monastic the convict, the best thing about going to prison is the joy there is in leaving. "Go to prison," I'm tempted to say. "There is no other way to have one of the best experiences life has to offer: getting out."

Hard not to be flippant about it. It's been less than two weeks since the classic gate scene was performed for my benefit: "Well, Forest," the gate guard actually said, "it certainly is encouraging whenever I see someone leave *this* way." (It wasn't long ago that several climbed over the high double fence, the barbed wire retaining only one faded prison khaki winter jacket.) "I do hope you'll never be back."

And so do I.

The reasons—best said by analogy—are several:

Prisons are small socialist states of the least imaginative, most bureaucratic sort. The maximum security prison, with its layers of barred cages, is perhaps Albania. The medium-security prison (correctional institution!) is post-occupation Czechoslovakia. The multitude of minimum security labor camps, depending on staff, range in quality from Sweden (very rare) to East Germany (common). Wisconsin reportedly has one of the better prison systems, which is akin to the likelihood that once upon a time there were "better" stretch racks. In any event, it is likely that most states maintain prison systems that are more toward the Albania/East Germany end of the spectrum.

Or, not gray welfare states, they are Nazi schools. In the century-old limestone walls of Wisconsin's maximum-security prison, Waupun, a penitentiary that could have been the set for any James Cagney Big-House movie, one of the first questions asked by a fellow con was, "How do you like our kindergarten?" *That's it,* I thought; the thing about this place is you're treated like a kid. But then chewing on the idea, as one does during those era-long hours alone in a Volkswagen-sized cell, I realized that most kindergartens were considerably better and more human-respecting than this. The difference was that this was a compulsory, Reich-run, live-in kindergarten for Jewish 5-year-olds. And that realization still has the ring of truth to it.

But there is yet a better one. Go see Clarke and Kubrick's *2001* again. The part between earth apes with bone hammers and genetic re-birth in the light-show fall into electrified sheaves of day-glo wallpaper, the part of space ships and space stations. Both are variations on a theme, though the space station's wheel-shape is more appropriate to the prison essence. Again there are elements of compulsion—the on-going programming, the making of one's life into a computer-digestible punch card. Again there is the tyranny of state—stainless steel robot breast brushing in upon the terrifying vulnerability of private consciousness and flesh. Again there is the Nazi-boarding-school sterility—as if a freeze-drying of the genitals.

But in space stations and prisons, the essence is more pure. The bed is literally empty. The programming is complete. The Hal computer, though a somewhat less conversational model, is everywhere in evidence. And there is that overwhelming circularity.

The menu is circling—in one prison its orbit requiring more days than another, but always the equinox returns, the seasons of spaghetti and breaded pork chop renewed, a kind of greasy spring.

The programs are circling. The same class seems to be eternally re-cycling in the prison school. The same

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ing, reading, discussing and praying. Suddenly twelve men in rough clothes burst in shouting, "We are Warriors of Christ the King, we're here to defend the sacrament," and started tipping over the benches and attacking the people. The leaders knew the police were waiting for the first sign of trouble or violence to enter to arrest them. (The bishops had meanwhile authorized the police to invade the assembly on these conditions.) The crowd remained under control and went on singing until they were able to file out of the church unscathed. The incident created an enormous wave of sympathy and support, while the attitude of the police, hierarchy and government hardened. No one knows who the "Warriors" are, but the members of the assembly are convinced they were planted by the police to cause trouble.

It is ironical that the church has become the sanctuary for such ferment. And yet it is logical. For centuries the church has counted on the devotion of the masses; it was once the gathering point, the social heart of the community. And the masses are beginning to grasp their power. The traditionalist church has produced a revolutionary leadership, not only among young priests but also among ordinary people, that it cannot contain. If the hierarchy of the church only responds by allowing the Warriors of Christ the King to invade the sacristy and wreck a peaceful gathering, the people will respond in the Spanish tradition with a passionate sense of injustice and eventually with blood—a painful repetition of a painful history.

ANNE POWER

(Anne Power has lived in Spain and worked for the Vanguardia Obrera *youth movement. She revisited Madrid this spring.)*

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group-counseling session is forever on the edge of learning that children believe their parents and that prisoners were instructed from birth day onward that they weren't worth the forceps that pulled them from the womb. The same desk, the same file cabinet, the same license plate, the same Stop sign, the same khaki shirt forever being re-made in the prison factories. . .

The warden is circling: he beat his desk with his fist yesterday and yelled, "I am the warden!" And he'll do it again today and he'll say it again tomorrow. He'll say it before and after he says there is no race problem in his prison, that we don't punish, that the hole isn't the hole (it's intensive therapy), that there is no erosion of staff morale, that things are getting better, that we don't care what you write or say so long as you say it according to regulations and through proper channels. . .

The rituals are circling: between such and such a minute, the mail is to be had, the meal to be eaten, the clean khakis to be gotten, the monthly fruit order to be submitted, the canteen purchase to be completed, the room cleaning to be performed.

Time is delineated in circlings: "Only 43 more room inspections!" "Only 13 more fruit orders!" "Only 214 more sets of khakis!"

There is an even more significant similarity: it is the prison's distance from the planet earth. It is as if the walls and fences were more measurable in light hours than in yards.

In *2001* there was the birthday transmission to one of the bored astronauts, a stiff family event complete with the blowing out of candles, all received in color on a small screen in immaculate quarters forever immune to the roots of grass, and all arriving via the substantial delay to which even light is subject. The transmission seems less real than a chapter from Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*.

There is that mythical quality about events beyond prison. Surely there is a conspiracy of Tolkiens out there, a committee that does nothing but fabricate a myth-context that is supposed to be a warming-mitten around the penitential space station? Imagine! This letter is alleged to be from a person who doesn't live in prison! This newspaper supposedly describes a world without cell inspections, a world where it is possible to sleep in company with others!

Hobbits are more real.

And so we believe and yet we don't believe.

And the sense of existence, of I-ness disintegrates. However large the rock upon which one's name had been carved, the rock cracks and then crumbles and the sand that's left is desperately kept in an envelope. The self tries to believe that once this was a rock and once there was a name on it—my name! Or was it? Am I dreaming? Is the sand real? Was there ever a rock? My name?

Minds kept long times in cells know too powerfully the energy of dreams, too well the reality of fantasy.

What is real are the bars. The cell is real. The warden is real. The form requesting permission to write an unauthorized correspondent is real.

And yet there are those who, in more than body, survive prison, even ripen. It is a better proof of the existence of Yahweh than any in the *Summa*. Whatever answer is currently fashionable on the question of miracles, miracles remain the best proof that Yahweh gives. That this finger still strikes typewriter keys, that the felon-writer still imagines communication—there you have a miracle, and no small one.

JAMES FOREST

(James Forest, just paroled from the Wisconsin prison system after a year's punishment for participation in draft-record destruction, is co-chairman of the Catholic Peace Fellowship.)

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RACE, RIOTS AND REPORTERS

Press coverage of urban disorders

TERRY ANN KNOPF

As racial disorders have become a familiar part of the national scene, the press has demonstrated a growing awareness of its responsibilities and a healthy willingness to experiment with new policies and procedures. The now defunct Kerner Commission, the Community Relations Service of Department of Justice and the National League of Cities have all sponsored conferences designed to examine the quality of press coverage. One press official has reported having been invited to six or seven luncheons, several receptions and a dozen dinners, leading him to remark that "the only thing I have to fear from black power is obesity."

Technical improvements have been made; operational techniques updated. (The Pittsburgh police have on occasion provided a helicopter for the press.) Central headquarters or "press centrals" have been established so as to minimize conflicting reports. In accordance with new guidelines, newspapers have tended to move away from the "shotgun" approach—the front-page buildup, complete with splashy pictures and box scores of the latest "riot" news.

There is also evidence of greater sympathy and sensitivity toward blacks. How far we have come from a 1919 *New York Times* editorial comment on violent racial disorder in Washington, D.C. "The majority of the negroes [sic] in Washington before the great war were well behaved. . . . More of them admitted the superiority of the white race, and troubles between the two races were undreamed of. . . ." But serious problems remain. Glaring instances of inaccuracy, exaggeration, distortion, misinterpretation and bias have continued at every level —in newspapers and news magazines large and small, Northern and Southern, liberal and conservative. Many Americans—to the Left and Right of Spiro Agnew—understandably feel a certain uneasiness about the press.

The wire services, for example—probably the most underexamined segment of the press—may provide as much as 90 percent of the news contained in some newspapers on a given day. One error emanating from one wire service report in one city may be repeated in hundreds of newspapers (and news stations) across the country, and even if a correction is sent out, the chances of its being picked up by newspapers would be no greater than 50 percent.

A year ago an AP-man in Dallas, Texas, filed a story on a student takeover at Southern Methodist University. The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* in its evening edition on May 2, 1969, put the story on the front page and gave it a banner headline:

> BLACKS SEIZE OFFICE OF S.M.U.'S PRESIDENT
> Police are Called to Stand By.
>
> Dallas (AP)—Black students with some support from whites took over the office of the president of Southern Methodist University today and swore to remain until their demands are met. . . .
>
> Reports from the scene said from 30 to 35 students were in control of President Tate's office.
>
> The takeover occurred during a meeting of Tate and a campus organization, the Black League of Afro-American and African College Students.

The story had one major flaw—it simply wasn't true. While about 35 students had met with the university president, they were not "in control" of his office; nor

TERRY ANN KNOPF *is a research associate at the Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence at Brandeis University. This is her first appearance in* Commonweal.

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had they "swore to remain" until their demands were met. No "takeover" had occurred.

Glen Dromgoole, a staff writer for the *Star-Telegram* also covered the story and later reported what really happened. The black students had met with the president for more than five hours discussing recent demands. The talks were more friendly than hostile. (At one point hamburgers were brought in.) By the end of the meeting, agreement had been reached on most of the issues.

But misreporting is by no means the sole prerogative of the wire services. Last year, for example, some concerned parents in Jacksonville, Florida, removed their children from Kirby Smith Jr. High School after a local radio station had broadcast an exaggerated report of a fight between black and white students. The school principal later indicated that "classes continued and there was no panic." Nevertheless, the *Miami Herald* headlined its story on April 25, 1969:

MOMS MOB SCHOOL
AFTER RIOT 'NEWS'

A story appearing in the *Boston Globe* on May 10, 1969, told of a peaceful rally by a small group of students at a local theological seminary. According to the *Globe,* the rally was "brief and orderly." But the headline above the story read: "Newton Campus Erupts."

The Question of Meaning

The use of the word "riot" presents another problem because it has no precise meaning in terms of the current wave of disorders. Webster's dictionary defines a "riot" as a "tumultuous disturbance of the public peace by 3 or more persons assembled together and acting with a common intent." The difficulty is that "riots" have become so frequent and now come in so many sizes and shapes as to have rendered the word meaningless. There is something ludicrous about lumping together as "riots" Detroit, with 43 deaths, 7000 arrests and $45,000,000 in property damage and an incident in which 3 people break a few store windows. Yet this is precisely what the press still does.

No law says the press has to interpret, and not simply report, the news. However, having assumed this responsibility, the press does have an obligation to make reasonable judgments based upon careful and thoughtful analysis. Unfortunately, press attempts in the direction of social science research have been rather amateurish, particularly where new trends and patterns are concerned.

The case of the Cleveland "shoot-out" serves as a good example. On July 23, 1968, an intense gunbattle broke out between the police and a group of black nationalists led by Ahmed Evans. By the time the disorder was over, 16,400 National Guardsmen had been mobilized, 9 persons had been killed, while the property damage was estimated at $2.6 million.

Immediately, the Cleveland tragedy was described as a deliberate plot against the police. The *Cleveland Press* (July 24, 1968) compared the violence to guerrilla activity in Vietnam:

> . . . it didn't seem to be a Watts, or a Detroit, or a Newark. Or even a Hough of two years ago. No, this tragic night seemed to be part of a plan.

A reporter writing in the *New York Times* (July 28, 1968) stated: ". . . It marks perhaps the first documented case in recent history of black, armed, and organized violence against the police."

More recent reports have revealed that the "shoot-out" was something less than a planned uprising and that the situation at the time was considerably more complicated than indicated initially. Unfortunately, following the events in Cleveland, disorders in which shots may have been fired were immediately suspected by the press of being part of a "wave." A series of errors involving a handful of cities became the basis of a myth—that the pattern of violence in 1968 had changed from spontaneous to premeditated outbreaks.

The national press bore an especially heavy responsibility. Few of the nationally-known newspapers and news magazines attempted to verify sniping reports coming out of the cities and over the wire services; few were willing to undertake independent investigations of their own; and far too many were overly zealous in their assertions of a new "trend" based on limited and unconfirmed evidence. Unwittingly or not, the national press had constructed a scenario on armed uprisings.

The news magazines should be singled out for the greatest criticism. While having more time to check and verify reports than daily newspapers, the news magazines were even more vocal in their assertions of a "new pattern." On September 13, 1968, *Time* took note of an "ominous trend" in the country and declared that the violence "appears to be changing from spontaneous combustion of a mob to the premeditated shoot-outs of a far-out few." The story went on to indicate that "many battles" had begun with "well-planned sniping at police."

Nearly a year later, on June 27, 1969, long after investigations by a task force of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, the Lemberg Center and the *New York Times* (which reversed itself on the Cleveland question) had cast serious doubt on premeditated outbreaks in Cleveland and elsewhere, *Time* was still talking about the possibilities of a "guerrilla summer" and reminding its readers of the time in Cleveland when "police were lured into an ambush." Once started, myths are very difficult to extinguish.

Another of the myths created by the press involves an alleged "shift" in racial disturbances from large to small cities. On July 25, 1969, a syndicated reporter for the News Enterprise Association (NEA) noted: "The socially sizzling summer has begun—but unlike recent history, it

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seems to be the minor, not the major, cities which are sweltering." In an article entitled "Riots, 1969 Style," *Newsweek* declared on August 11, 1969:

> . . . the traditional riot scenario is still being played out this summer—with one major difference. This season the stage has shifted from the major population centers to such small and disparate communities as Kokomo, Ind., Santa Ana, Calif., Cairo, Ill., Middletown, Conn. and Farrell, Pa.

On September 9, 1969, the *New York Times* captioned a picture as follows:

> NEW RIOT PATTERN: Rioting in Hartford, Conn., last week . . . underscored the fact that smaller cities this summer have had more racial trouble this summer than the big ones.

Similar stories appeared at about the same time in scores of other newspapers including the *Wall Street Journal,* the *Baltimore News American,* the *Woburn* (Mass.) *Times,* the *Pittsburgh Press* and the *Georgia News.*

In fact, racial disorders occurring over the last few years—not just this past summer—have been concentrated in smaller cities. About 75 percent of all outbreaks recorded in 1968 by the Lemberg Center's Civil Disorder Clearinghouse occurred outside the 100 largest cities. For the first six months of 1969 and for the summer period as well, no appreciable change in the percentage was noted. Furthermore, many of the cities cited as prototypes of this latest "new pattern"—Hartford and Middletown, Conn., Cairo, Ill.—had had disorders in previous years. The difference is that such outbreaks were completely overshadowed by a few enormous outbreaks in large cities such as Newark and Detroit. Nobody noticed outbreaks in smaller cities in those days.

Knowing the origin of these and other myths would be useful—a faulty wire service report, an inept reporter, an unreliable source. But aside from the fact that such a task would be almost impossible, it would miss a central point—that the system of reporting ensures that errors of fact and interpretation may be repeated, compounded and reformulated as myths.

In recent years, the various components of the press have become extremely intertwined and dependent upon one another. The wire services, the nationally known newspapers and the news magazines constantly feed one another news and information. While the system undoubtedly speeds the flow of news to the public, it has encouraged a parrot-like character within the press in which the various segments tend to reproduce rather than examine each other's views.

In this respect, the *New York Times'* caption proclaiming a "NEW PATTERN" assumes greater significance. Prior to its appearance in the *Times,* I happened to talk with Jack Rosenthal who had been working on a story on the relatively cool summer. When the subject of a new "shift" in violence came up, I indicated that such allegations were false and misleading. Rosenthal wrote a thoughtful piece, dwelling on police-community relations, civic programs and the new community spirit among blacks. No mention in the story was made of a "new riot pattern"—except for the picture caption appearing above the Rosenthal story. Apparently, the caption writer had paid more attention to what *Newsweek* and the *Wall Street Journal* were saying than to his fellow staffer at the *Times.*

We come now to the question of bias. The failure of the press to tell the complete story in the case of Cornell or the right story in the case of Cleveland goes beyond a lack of initiative or an inclination to sensationalize. It

also indicates a certain bias. Notwithstanding Mr. Agnew's attacks on the press, this bias cuts across political and geographical lines and is all the more pernicious for its subtlety. The press is no more aware of its bias than is the general public aware of its own. In part, we could call it a class bias in that those who comprise the press—reporters, editors, headline writers, etc. —are part of the vast American middle class and, as such, express its views, values and standards.

Both the general public and the press share the same dislike of the protesters; both are unable to understand the violence as expressions of protest against oppressive conditions. Both prefer the myth of orderly, peaceful change, extolling the virtues of private property and public decorum. People are expected to behave in a certain way. They just don't go around yelling and cursing or throwing rocks. Both will grant that it took a revolution to secure our independence and a civil war to end slavery (at least officially) but that was all very long ago and somehow different.

The bias also has elements of racism in that the matter of color is never far from the surface. It is difficult to say where the class bias begins and racist bias ends. These elements are inseparable and serve to reenforce one another.

The reaction to recent studies on racial disorders provides one indication of this bias. A growing body of research shows that such disorders are a part of the social process. The process includes an accumulation of grievances; a series of tension-heightening incidents (such as police harassment); and a precipitating event (such as an arrest) which crystallizes the tensions and grievances

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that have mounted—the "last straw" which triggers the violence.

The "typical rioter" is young, better educated than the average inner-city black and more dissatisfied. He wants a better job but feels that prospective employers will discriminate against him. He is likely to be a long-term resident of the city. (In a survey in Detroit, 90 percent of those arrested were from Detroit, 7 percent lived in the same state and only 1 percent lived outside the state.) He is extremely proud of his race and is politically conscious. He is more interested and better informed about politics than blacks who are not involved in a disorder. He is also more inclined toward political activism. (In one survey, nearly 40 percent of the participants in the disorder—as compared with only about 25 percent of the nonparticipants—reported having been involved in civil rights activity.) Finally, he receives substantial support from the rest of his community which does not participate actively but regards the violence as necessary and beneficial.

Nevertheless, as important as the findings in these studies are, they have made virtually no impact on the vast majority of the American public. Most Americans continue to believe that the violence is caused by a tiny and insignificant minority, that "outside agitators" and "criminal elements" are mainly responsible for isolated outbursts which have little or no social significance.

Intellectuals must share a portion of the blame for this situation. Having completed their studies, they have been notoriously reluctant to roll up their academic shirtsleeves and assume a leadership role in presenting their ideas to the public. There is always a trace of condescension in their assumption that good ideas from above will somehow trickle down to the "masses of asses," as one academic I know calls them.

In any event, at least the studies are there. Greater responsibility for the failure to confront the public's resistance rests with the press. It has failed to commit its enormous power and prestige on behalf of these studies. It has failed to place the ideas before the public and push for reform in an aggressive, effective manner—a splash of headlines and stories initially, but little in the way of real follow-up. Instead, the press has opted for the status quo, reflecting, sustaining and perpetuating the outworn beliefs of its predominantly white readership.

The previously cited preoccupation with "outside agitators" is one manifestation of this bias. In a survey of six Northern cities undertaken by the Lemberg Center, 77 percent of all whites interviewed believed that "outside agitators" were a major or contributing cause of disorders. When Mayor Sam Yorty recently blamed a rash of school disorders on a conspiracy of the Black Student Union, the Students for a Democratic Society, Communist sympathizers and the National Council of Churches, he was following a long, though not very honorable, tradition, dating back to Southerners' view of Abolitionists as "Northern agents" and the attribution of interracial clashes during World War I and II to "Bolsheviks" and "Axis plots."

Such allegations are usually made without a shred of concrete evidence. Nevertheless, the press has frequently taken its cues from the public in formulating and circulating such reports. When rumors circulated that "outside agitators" were involved in a disturbance in Omaha, Nebraska, a news story appearing in the *Arkansas Gazette* on June 27, 1969, made reference to the rumors but also mentioned that the mayor had no evidence to support such reports. Yet, the headline above the story read: "Outsiders Linked To Omaha Rioting."

The tendency to engage in labeling is perhaps a more serious manifestation of bias. A look at the way in which the disorders are written up reveals, tragically, that the vast majority of the press and the public share essentially the same view of the violence—as meaningless, purposeless, senseless, irrational, and immoral.

Press treatment of the disorders following the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. illustrates the point. The sense of loss and injury among blacks at the time of the assassination was extremely great—far greater than among whites. The unprecedented wave of disorders—approximately 200 of them—were expressive of the anger, the bitterness, the resentment, the frustration that black people felt everywhere.

How did the press handle the disorders? How did it write about the participants? How did it describe their activity? Two newspaper stories typify the coverage at the time.

The *Buffalo News* ran this story on April 9, 1968, the day of Dr. King's funeral:

> An uneasy calm enveloped Buffalo today—the day of Dr. Martin Luther King's funeral—after an evening of burning, rock throwing and looting by gangs of Negro youths. . . .
>
> Roving gangs seemed to concentrate on [one] area, sweeping it from one end to the other several times. Gangs regrouped as soon as police moved on to other trouble spots.
>
> The rampage seemed to swiftly gain in intensity from 7:30 to 9:30 PM, when reported vandalism started to slack off, finally dying out by 1 AM today. . .
>
> As the roving gangs began to concentrate on the Jefferson Ave. stores, police shut off all traffic along Jefferson between Best and East Ferry. . . .
>
> Shortly after 7 PM, Mayor Sedita sent about 40 volunteers, mostly Negroes, into the embattled neighborhoods to try to pacify the rampaging youths.

One day later, the *Trenton Times-Advertiser* ran this story:

> Trenton was in a state of emergency today, reeling from the effects of a night of terror and worry-

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ing about the threat of more to come tonight.

The orgy of destruction and looting that broke over the city about 7:30 last night continued out of control until about 1:30 this morning. . . .

Of the more than 300 youths who rampaged through the downtown and Battle Monument areas last night, 108 were in the county jail today. . .

The riot was carried out by Negro youths almost all of them either teen-agers or in their early 20's. . . . Many of the rioters boasted they would be back on the streets tonight. . . .

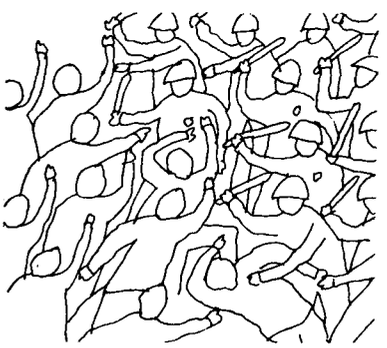
Shouts of "Black Power!" "We Shall Overcome!" and "Whitey, Get Out!" were voiced by the youths. Some added, "Dr. King is dead and so is non-violence." . . .

The riot gained momentum quickly soon after 6:30 p.m. when gangs of youths began roaming the downtown area and some incidents were reported. But by 7:30, it was in full swing. . . .

The marauders literally ran the police in circles. . . . All along the way, there was the sound of broken display windows to mark the movement of the vandals. . . .

For the most part, the rioters appeared to be on a gay holiday. But the gaiety was punctuated by sudden flareups of tension between police and rioters.

No attempt is made in these stories to place the violence in a social context. The reference to the assassination of Dr. King is perfunctory, with only a passing men-



tion of his funeral and a few shouts about his death. The reader merely understands that the violence *followed* his assassination—not that his assassination *precipitated* it.

Value-laden words receive unusual emphasis. Who are the participants? They are young and black. That much is clear. But we are also told that they are "vandals," "marauders," that they travel in "gangs." What do they do? They go around "roaming," "roving," "rampaging" and "rioting." What is it like to engage in the violence? A "riot" . . . a "gay holiday" . . . an "orgy" . . . "in full swing." The participants are "marauders" not men; they "rove" instead of run; they move in "gangs" not groups; they engage in "vandalism" not simply violence.

And the particular choice of words. As described in these stories, the participants behave in a wild, aimless, crazy manner. To "rampage" does not simply mean to move about, but to wander with no fixed destination or purpose—"to move hither and thither at random" according to the Oxford English Dictionary.

The young men's behavior appears lighthearted, even sensual. They are on a lark—a "gay holiday," an "orgy of destruction." Even the word "riot" has meaning here. As noted previously, a "riot" is a violent disturbance of the peace by a group of individuals. However, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, a "riot" originally meant:

> Wanton, loose, or wasteful living; debauchery, dissipation, extravagance; a noisy feast or wanton revel.

The terms "gangs," "vandals," and "marauders," along with others such as "hoodlums," "toughs," "troublemakers" and "rowdies," are among the most commonly used by the press. The problem is that we have all grown so used to viewing blacks as stereotyped criminals that it is difficult to picture them in any other role. Thus, we have such concoctions as "roving gangs," "roving vandals," "roving gangs of hoodlum youths," "roving gangs of rampaging teenagers," or (for variety) "a window-smashing rampage by roving gangs of Negro youths." The *New York Times* assertion on July 1, 1969 that "roving bands of ruffians" were involved in a disturbance in Middletown, Connecticut, seems somewhat feeble by comparison.

Headlines frequently focus on the loaded language used in the news stories. On September 5, 1969, the *Washington Post* reported that Gov. Albert Brewer had sent 100 National Guard troops into the little town of Aliceville, Alabama. The story had Sheriff Louis Coleman disputing the Governor's claim that "gangs" were active in the streets. In fact, according to the *Post* the participants consisted of "70 singing and hand-clapping Negro children." Nevertheless, the story was headlined:

TROOPS SENT TO ALABAMA TOWN
TO COPE WITH 'ROAMING GANGS'

All too often, the immediate causes of the disorders are either buried or omitted from the story. Headlines such as these merely serve to consign the precipitating event and other social factors in the violence to further insignificance. Clearly, the effect of such labeling by the press is to pander to the public's prejudice, reinforcing stereotypes, myths and other outmoded beliefs. The press not only frightens the public but confuses it as well.

A task force of the recent National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence has noted that as the American public learned to accept labor strikes, they became less violent. But can we yet be sure what is the cause and what is the effect? Does less violence result in greater public sympathy? Or is a more serious public understanding of issues a prerequisite for reducing tension?

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IS AMERICA MORAL?

The American moral tradition needs demonstration rather than reaffirmation

RICHARD J. NEUHAUS

Suggest to students today that they should appeal to the conscience of America, and then cover your head against the slings and arrows of outraged radicalism. In many activist circles on the left, the belief that America has no conscience has assumed the degree of certainty we used to associate with dogma. As for an American moral tradition, the record of genocide against Indian, black man and the peasantry of the world makes talk about the evidences of American morality a little like trying to "balance" history's picture of Nazi Germany. ("After all, you do have to give Hitler credit for the Autobahn.")

With head uncovered and neck stuck out, Professor James Sellers proposes not only that there is an American moral tradition but that this tradition is alive, if not well, in "saving symbols" that can help us through the present crisis toward a vindication of the hope that is implicit in America's founding vision *(Public Ethics: American Morals and Manners.* Harper & Row. $8.95). To be sure an American moral tradition is not the same thing as a history of moral behavior. Sellers is sensitive to the perfidy of America's oppressive power from Brooklyn to Guatemala to Southeast Asia. Yet, taking his cue from the 18th-century Baron de Montesquieu, Sellers argues that there is a "climate" within a community which forms the ethical horizons by which its manners and morals are shaped. Sellers argues the importance of Montesquieu as a tutor, albeit posthumously, to the American revolutionaries who merged his idea of values required in a republic with an indigenous, and more biblical, morality to form the ethos of the American experiment.

Of course, the shape and vitality of the moral tradition cannot be discovered by a leap backwards to the 18th century, just as, contrary to some contemporary biblicists, the church will not be renewed by a "return to the biblical thought-world." Using Yves M.-J. Congar's ten-point sketch of the development of Christian tradition, Sellers attempts a parallel outline of the American moral tradition. The moral tradition presently available to us has emerged from the parent community (England, Europe, Christendom) and the apostolic writings (e.g., Declaration of Independence) through the magisterium (e.g., Congress), commonsense arrangements, folklore and myth, art and literature, and the history of conscientious dissent—all of which are constantly reshaping the original deposit. While Sellers is clearly sympathetic to this emerging tradition, he is not uncritical; he has no ambition to be the ethicist laureate of the American Way.

"Morality," he says, "is sanctioned conduct aimed at rescuing men from the most menacing crises to life, to the quality of life, to the sense of the human—crises that are always there and always appearing no matter how complete the triumph over the last crisis." His purpose is primarily descriptive and analytic. Whether the tradition is humane or brutalizing, profound or superficial, there *is* an American moral tradition, a distinctively American history of "sanctioned conduct." In America as elsewhere, ethics develops in response to crisis; it is the system of saving symbols by which the community hopes to emerge to a better future. The moral crisis in American society, both at its beginning and now, is "extrinsic control of existential space (communal and personal)." The dynamic of the American ethos is the belief that "deliverance from this crisis is realized through gaining the initiative and capacity to dispose of one's own space (communal and personal)." In short—although for some reason Professor Sellers avoids the term—*freedom* is the touchstone of the American moral tradition.

Put so baldly, the statement that freedom (or deliverance from extrinsic control of personal and communal space) is the theme of American morality seems both simplistic and implausible. Yet a persuasive argument can be made that, in the struggle for independence from England, in the contest with the frontier wilderness, up through the black militancy and student radicalism of our time, Americans have thought of themselves as a people striving for freedom. In the same vein as Staughton Lynd's *Intellectual Origins of American Radicalism,* Sellers contends that the moral points of reference in contemporary radicalism largely derive from an American revolutionary history that is still in search of fulfillment. The usefulness of this thesis, however, depends upon our adequately taking into account four rapidly growing challenges to the moral tradition Sellers proposes as the starting point of public ethics.

First, it is by no means apparent that the present ruling circles in Washington are conversant with the tradition he describes. This is not said to disparage Messrs.

RICHARD J. NEUHAUS, *a Lutheran pastor in Brooklyn, is co-author with Peter L. Berger of* Movement and Revolution *(Doubleday).*

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Nixon, Mitchell, Agnew, Kissinger, *et al.* It simply seems evident from their public and, as much as one can know, private behavior that the "saving symbols" of the struggle "against extrinsic control of one's space" do not dominate their world of moral discourse. This is revealed, for example, by their isolation from the communities of the poor and the young where the struggle is most intense.

Second and related (because it makes the first attitude politically possible and even profitable), is the reality of the Silent Majority. Whether Mr. Nixon invented the Silent Majority or the Silent Majority invented Mr. Nixon is a moot question; it is clear that they survive in a symbiotic relationship made possible by mutual indifference to the American moral tradition. Beyond indifference—which, after all, may be the usual state of the insensate majority—the Silent Majority may well have embraced counter-values that only require the immediacy of crisis in order to become explicit in their refutation of the moral tradition that Sellers would champion. True, "law and order" may itself be a saving symbol in what some Americans see as their struggle against extrinsic control of their space. When, however, the logic of law and order brings us to the present moment when three-quarters of those interviewed in a recent poll are disposed toward suspending the Bill of Rights, it is difficult to see the continuity with Sellers' moral tradition. If, on the other hand, the tradition is defined so broadly as to include the Silent Majority's version of the quest for freedom, the definition is comprehensive to the point of meaninglessness. An American moral tradition that can embrace what students of fascism call "the extremism of the center" may warrant reflection but not preservation. Which brings us to the two challenges posed from the "radical" side of the American quandary.

As I have spelled out in detail elsewhere (*Movement and Revolution,* Doubleday), there is no radical movement in America today, only a complex of radical movements that sometimes provisionally cohere around specific issues. The two movement sectors most relevant to the present consideration are the totalitarian (usually a version of Marxism) and the personalist-communitarian (frequently championing "anarchism"). A helpful distinction made by some is to call the first "hard" revolutionaries and the second "soft" revolutionaries. Whatever the differences in each camp, the contrast between Herbert Marcuse, Youth Against War and Fascism, and the Panthers, on the one hand, and Abbie Hoffman, Allen Ginsberg and the Yippies, on the other, should be clear. Both are growing and both are explicitly hostile to the tradition Sellers proposes as distinctively American. For both, the "saving symbols" of the republican experiment, and the democratic processes on which it depends, are odious delusions. The "hard" revolutionaries posit an alternative ideology to that which informs the American moral tradition. The "soft" revolutionaries reject the philosophical underpinnings, largely derived from the Enlightenment, of the American "apostolic writings" (the most crucial example is the denial of the preeminence of reason). For these groups, the "intellectual origins of American radicalism" are definitely not those traced by Staughton Lynd or James Sellers.

It simply will not do to dismiss these challenges to the American moral tradition as "un-American." The Nixon regime and its Silent Majority, together with the Marxist and Communitarian revolutionaries, are now part of the American tradition and each makes its claims to morality. Those who affirm the tradition outlined by Sellers—and I count myself in their number—are now a minority and will become an increasingly embattled minority. *Public Ethics* would have been an even better book than it is, had the author devoted attention to the political task of contending for the tradition, as well as to the intellectual task of appropriating it for the development of a "public ethics." Ethicists who wish to see the republican experiment fulfilled rather than repudiated may well, if they remain a-political, become the curators of saving symbols that have lost their power to save.

"The Vital Center"

We are approaching the flash point in American public life. Campus killings, the expansion of the Indochina war, and the Nixon regime's apparent contempt for the restraints required by a republican form of government combine with the counter-values of the Silent Majority to assault from one side the American moral tradition. The attack from the other side comes in the form of an increasing readiness to make common cause with fascist tactics in the service of totalitarian ideologies. In the period immediately ahead we will witness, I am confident, a more public and desperate search for the "vital center" in American politics. More and more intellectuals, some with impressive anti-war credentials, will attempt to distinguish themselves from the perversities of both "right" and "left." But, however laudable their desire to reaffirm the best in the American tradition, they run the risk of being indistinguishable from the middle-way liberalism which is by now neither very new nor very plausible.

The vitality of the American moral tradition does not need reaffirmation so much as it needs demonstration. Renewed pledges of allegiance will ring hollow unless wedded to urgent action on the agenda of legitimate grievances presented mainly from the left. It becomes increasingly clear that militant protest must re-appropriate, or appropriate for the first time, the "saving symbols" of Americanism. With Old Glory unfurled and monkey-wrenches at the ready, the hard-hats swarm into downtown New York "to give these faggot commies a lesson in patriotism." One middle-aged observer who is deeply opposed to the war summed up his outrage and resentment in the simple remark, "I want my flag back." But

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who gave the flag to the Agnews, Hoovers and barbarians of the construction unions? They did not have to take it by force, but simply picked it up where too many of us left it lying. Reactionaries wrap themselves in the flag and radicals helpfully supply the tactics that pin it into place. Dave McReynolds, whose radical commitment is as thoughtful as it is tested, recently warned against the absurdity of shouting from the rooftops that Ho Chi Minh is going to win. Ho Chi Minh, he said, didn't make a revolution in Vietnam by shouting imported slogans about Chinese or Russian invincibility. Rather, he fought the oppressors with the force of his devotion to Vietnam, his almost chauvinistic patriotism. Similarly in Cuba, Fidel Castro outmatched Batista in the plausibility of his commitment to the Cuban people. Radicalism that aims for real change must be believably for, and not against, America. For the overthrow of what is wrong in the American present we must invoke what is better in an American memory and an American hope.

Effectively relating to the saving symbols of what Sellers calls "the greater community" of the nation requires that we multiply actions such as Clergy and Laymen Concerned's "rite of rededication" which was used in many churches on Flag Day, June 14. Following Mr. Nixon's Cambodian caper, a whole new series of creative confrontations has become possible within the context of Congress and carefully selected political campaigns. The pressure must continue to come from the outside; the politicians are largely middle men, or mechanics of a process that puts pressure into contact with policy. Working "within the system" is not so constricting if, as Sellers contends, the "system" is not so much a decision-making structure as a climate of morals and manners within which a people struggle to regain control over their personal and communal space. The climate of the American tradition does not lack provocative models that are waiting to be exploded under those who thought the American Revolution completed. A fresh package of strategic possibilities is waiting to be discovered, for example, in the parallels between 1770 and 1970. Then too the people were appealing to Parliament against the despot's denial of their constitutional rights. Viewed in this light, the proposal for a Delegate Assembly in Philadelphia or for a Third Continental Congress does not seem so far out.

The appeal to patriotism might be condemned as quaint or diversionary by some radicals, and as blasphemous by many who call themselves conservatives. But it would provide an enlightening test of the current vitality of the American moral tradition. In a recent television interview, a construction worker solemnly stated, and then more solemnly repeated, "If my own son desecrated our country's flag, I'd have to kill him." His piety, for that is what it is, has parallels in the most ancient political expressions of man. For him the flag represents that highest good for which he would both take life and surrender his own life. While we may deplore the restrictiveness of his commitment, we should not mock. It is both cruel and strategically stupid to delight in despising another person's experience of the sacred.

The importance of Sellers' book is its analysis of the American moral tradition. Unless we learn to affirm that tradition and put it to the test, there is little point in developing the "discipline of public ethics" recommended by Sellers, for then we will never know whether the American moral tradition might have been able to save us in our struggle to wrest the space of this time from extrinsic control. We cannot anticipate with any certainty the new order that would follow such a failure, but we can be certain of this: the new order will have little room for a public ethics that has as its touchstone the idea of freedom.

M*A*S*H*I*N*G M*A*S*H

THE SCREEN

It's no news, I suppose, that *M*A*S*H* (20th Century Fox) is a phenomenal success. Not only with audiences: the reception from the critics was more unanimously rapturous than any I can remember for a film of recent years. Since I disliked it I find its success really interesting, and I've seen it twice now. It's true it's very shrewdly cast and enthusiastically performed, brightly and expertly directed. But the end result is so fundamentally dumb and boorish—that for all its apocalyptic pretensions, it's really like a movie with a lampshade on its head. Much of its humor is "black" but most of it unfortunately is roguish—the aren't-they-devils? kind of joke, endlessly repeated, full of frat house pranks and locker-room jollity. Partly I suppose these qualities belong to the sensibility of the genre, military comedy. And one of the genuine virtues of *M*A*S*H* is the accuracy —sometimes quite astounding—with which it captures a real and familiar type, the wheeler-dealer, *Playboy*-reading American male at bay and in a bunch. Its whole problem is that it never gets outside of this sensibility. Which is an under-statement: the movie's attitude toward its super-cool, sex-hound, anti-army heroes is so simply and flatly admiring, even adoring, as to make a past commercial product like *Mr. Roberts* seem morally sophisticated by comparison.

But unlike *Mr. Roberts, M*A*S*H* is by the critics' account a "radical" film. And in fact in a general way it does give that impression. Which becomes curious when you realize how tepidly and unfashionably liberal most of its expressed attitudes are. A big and repeated point about the heroes, for example, is that they are not bigots. When their buddy from Georgia (Tom Skerritt) objects

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to sharing the tent with a black man, the heroes (Elliott Gould and Donald Sutherland) look at him incredulously, laugh, and push him over backwards—and that's the end of that problem. And later when a black football player is called a "coon," he retaliates after a shaky moment or two by making an obscene remark about the white player's sister—and the incident ends in a meant-to-be hilarious chase across the field. This brothers-under-the-skin approach to racism is entirely characteristic of the movie—with its persistent idealization of the great male community of the cock and the gun—its brothers below-the-belt message. Nothing "radical" about this either—it would seem in fact to be standard commercial philistinism. Nor about the general hostility to war and the military, and to institutional religion that accompanies it. Where the film is in a way "radical" is in pushing these conventional genre attitudes to such extremes of execution. The war-is-hell point is made remorselessly and repeatedly with the by-now famous operating room sequences. The eat-drink-die-tomorrow idea is enacted with a similar insistence and intention to shock (fade-out from a martini in the barracks to a severed leg in the surgery). And the attack on religion as well "goes farther" than usual (or than used to be so). Though in this area, as in many in the film, it is hard to tell the difference between the "radical" and the merely ham-fisted. As for example when the religiously inclined doctor (Robert Duvall) falls to his knees by his bunk in the full hearing and view of his fellow officers to pray aloud for such things as the welfare of "our commander-in-chief." Or when the same man tells a prudish but willing nurse (Sally Kellerman) that God has brought them together, which causes her to bare her breasts and exclaim "Let His will be done!" Not content apparently with dead horses to beat, *M*A*S*H* turns them into sitting ducks as well.

But the movie's most pointed animus is directed at the people who take the army seriously. And they are mainly represented not—surprisingly—by any figure of rank or power (the only general we see is amiably corrupt) but instead (and significantly) by Sally Kellerman's rather pathetic and vulnerable nurse, Hot Lips Houlihan. When this character first appears she unknowingly seals her fate forever with the hail-fellow heroes—when she announces to one of them that she thinks of the army as her "home." This moment is nearly the best in the film: a warmly beautiful woman reveals herself with both nervousness and pride as a self-defeating prig—it is moving, complicated, and true. But then almost instantly Miss Kellerman (who offers a personality and performance more humanly interesting than the film would seem to call for) is linked with the sanctimonious Duvall, and becomes like him a crude cartoon of an abstract enemy (they even become stock villains, plotting to undo the heroes, even chuckling over it)—another in a numbing series of set-ups for the heroes' moral triumph. Anyway she is a rigid and narrow-minded lady. So that the heroes—zealots for tolerance—proceed in a most sysbible-reading doctor too, of course—he ends up in a tematic way to hound, persecute and humiliate her (the straitjacket). But as it turns out she is marvelously improved by this treatment—destroyed it seems only to be saved. Which means that she gives up her Fancy Ideas, joins the gang at last, and becomes what the film holds up apparently as a female ideal—a kind of ambulatory sex organ, dazed but happy.

All familiar Yahoo stuff, I suppose. But there's something oddly out-of-focus about it too—hard to identify. Until it comes on you that what *M*A*S*H* has rather shrewdly done is reversed the expected roles: instead of the persecutors and bullies being militarists or organization types with petty-Fascist leanings, this time the victims are. And the wielders of brutal and triumphant power are apostles of freedom and anarchy. It's just this reversal more than anything else, I think, that makes *M*A*S*H* seem so contemporary, even "radical"—and that accounts as well for much of the enthusiasm left-wing critics have felt for it. And to, say, an S.D.S. member it might all perhaps feel very "true"—in the way that movie-daydreams often do.

That it's a daydream however (more often than not the best movies have been) is not my objection—but that it's such a repellent and dishonest one as *M*A*S*H* works it out. It's not only that Gould and Sutherland, the heroes, risk nothing by having almost everything on their side—charm, wit, the allegiance of children and dogs (they train an adoring Korean boy to mix and serve their martinis—one of the most authentic details in the film, but like everything else about them, offered apparently for our admiration), such surpassing brilliance as surgeons that Congressmen are their petitioners, and such good luck that only fools, bumblers, and women longing to be laid are their enemies—the thing they risk least of all, the thing we can least imagine them risking, is Unpopularity. It's the organization types—Duvall and Kellerman—who risk that. As for the heroes, without the barracks gang we see them mobilizing and expressing

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they would hardly exist at all. It's no accident, I think, that the final abasement of Hot Lips, her exposure in the shower, occurs in the film long after she has ceased to be any kind of threat or force or even presence—after it's been conceded even that she is "a damn good nurse" (unlike Duvall's surgeon who is made out to be murderously incompetent). Her sole and continuing offense, it appears, is that she continues to be in her heart the kind of person the heroes feel no one ought to be—that is, for one thing, single and separate—and the anger directed against her has all the marks of the anger of a mob against the person who stays apart. Which is a key, I think, to much of the film's feeling, its energy and high-spirits: it is mob feeling—just as its values and bad jokes are crowd-jokes, crowd-values. It's certainly meaningful that the two decisive attacks made by the barracks gang on the Duvall and Kellerman characters (their love-making is broadcast to the camp over the public-address system, her shower is turned into a public show) are both, in the most literal and radical sense, exposures—specifically assaults on the private person. The infectious pleasure and excitement of this kind of assault, the deep mob-instinct that it enacts, are at least as central to *M*A*S*H* as its overt liberal attitudes are. But the combination is, I think, a peculiarly corrupt one. The Army wanted to ban this film, presumably because of its anti-militarism—then decided not to. For once and in spite of themselves, I think they made the right decision. If *M*A*S*H* has any effect on audiences in army camps, it will certainly not be to encourage dissidence. For in fact the army—as anyone who's been in it or even near it should surely know—is held together, in its crucial lower ranks at least, not by chaplains or bible-reading or prayers for the commander-in-chief, nor by any kind of organizational idealism—but by just that community of loutishness, brutality, and gut-level cynicism that *M*A*S*H* promotes and celebrates. But for people—critics and audiences—who have the political luxury of choosing, its spirit is something, it seems to me, that ought to be resisted.

JAMES HARVEY

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By June 24, the Continuation Fund had reached $33,043 of the $46,000 estimated to assure *Commonweal's* continued publication. There has been some response to the May 5 subscribers' letter, but the drive has never recovered the momentum it lost when the mail strike stopped things in their tracks. With the slack summer season upon us, we urge subscribers and other readers who have not yet taken part in the campaign to send their contributions without delay to Commonweal Continuation Fund, 232 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10016.

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BOOKS

The new political pornography: a case in point

Confirm or Deny: Informing the People on National Security

PHIL G. GOULDING

Harper & Row, $7.95

THOMAS M. CONRAD

Phil Goulding was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) in 1965, and was promoted to ASD (PA) upon the departure of his boss, Arthur Sylvester, in 1967. Sylvester will be remembered for his dictum that the government has an inherent right to lie; the history of the office of ASD (PA) will be remembered in terms of the frequent practice of the statement of principle.

It is hard to understand the point of this book. Either the author, or this reviewer, or both, are confused. On the one hand, the moral of some of the case histories seems to be that the press create embarrassments for the government by misinformation and "unauthorized" speculation, and that they should wait for, and take seriously, the official statements of fact and policy. But then we are told that the authoritative statements of the Department of Defense are frequently in (honest) error, inevitably, due to the large and complex nature of the DOD. In trying to explain away failures of credibility as honest errors in internal DOD information, Mr. Goulding succeeds in making a terrifying case, for the thoughtful reader, for a degree and kind of bumbling which might easily produce accidental wars as well as continual crises-by-inadvertence. It is my *judgment* that while a great deal of bumbling takes place in the Department of Defense, it is not nearly as potentially dangerous as one might imagine from this book, nor is it nearly as credible an explanation for public relations "mistakes" as simple, bold-faced lying. It is interesting that none of the admittedly small sampling of case histories Mr. Goulding selects from his tenure in the DOD can be described as a straightforward case of total, bare lying: since we are all aware of the general character of official news management from 1955 to 1969, it is impossible to believe that even Mr. Goulding would defend his selected case histories as typical or revelatory of the main motives and methods of his job.

I commend this book to the readers of *Commonweal* as a titillating example of the new political pornography, in the same genre as Bill Moyers' article, "What We Learned," in *Foreign Affairs*, in which Moyers takes himself and Mr. Johnson to task for not creating a sufficient false sense of political participation in the Vietnam war for the American masses. Mr. Goulding seems to be asking his readers to reason together with him about when and how the government should lie to them. This would be an extremely touchy subject even if the government had been conducting foreign affairs with great prudence and restraint for many years, and had some moral and practical basis for asking very cautious limits on public information for the sake of national security in a world where knowledge is power to potential enemies as well as power for popular control of government actions. But the constant substantive abuses of public confidence (destroying it almost totally by now), the enormity of the foreign crimes which have been committed, and the essentially total exclusion of popular influence upon foreign policy, have rendered any appeals to restraint by press or others in ferreting out the truth not only nugatory, but also obscene. The essential facts are very simple: most people do not believe the U.S. government most of the time, even on those increasingly rare occasions when the official statements are true and complete; they do this because they have been (unsuccessfully) lied to about absolutely vital matters on countless occasions; and they have been lied to so frequently and so seriously because government activities, particularly in foreign affairs, have been contrary to the strongest feelings of tens of millions of Americans, whose dissent is not wanted or heeded. To attempt to excuse this lying or to ask, even subtly and implicitly, that the American citizenry react "reasonably" to it is either political pornography or a stunning example of the isolation of officialdom from reality in "their" country, a kind of isolation suggesting even personal insanity at some points in the past two Administrations.

In a peculiar way, this book, like the activities it seeks to justify by indirection (without ever facing head-on this issue of deliberate deception), is reassuring. Official deception of the American people, like its justifications, pays a backhanded compliment to the residual power of popular dissent—of popular veto if not of popular governance. We can start worrying when earnest young-old men no longer try to deceive us with every technique at their command, and no longer try to justify their attempts when they fail. If and when that day arrives, we will know that our government is secured against us, and no longer need fear even the residual whimpers of democracy.

REVIEWERS

THOMAS M. CONRAD is completing a book on strategic aspects of warfare.

FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN is author of the book *Do We Need the Church?* (Harper & Row).

JOSEPH L. WALSH is on the staff of the Church Society for College Work, Cambridge, Mass.

IRVING MALIN is author of *Saul Bellow's Fiction* (So. Illinois Univ. Press) and editor of *Saul Bellow and the Critics* (N.Y.U. Press).

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Projections: Shaping an American Theology for the Future

THOMAS F. O'MEARA & DONALD M. WEISSER, eds.

Doubleday, $5.95

RICHARD P. McBRIEN

The underlying thesis of this collection of essays is that theology is affected by its context or environment, that there is, indeed, an ecology of theology. Since the United States provides a unique environment for the doing of Christian theology, we can legitimately make projections about the future of a theology that would be distinctively American.

The editors tell us that they have solicited the talents of ten American theologians to discuss certain influences which presumably will be decisive for the presence of Christ in our culture: politics, revolution, technology, behavioral sciences, language, mass media, etc. The consistent response of the contributors is that Christ *can* be present to our culture, but only if Christian theology learns how to bridge the gap between theory and practice, promise and performance, rhetoric and reality, the inner dimension and the outer dimension of Christian thought and life.

Harvey Cox's essay is the shortest (8 pages) but it is required reading for those who suspect (on the basis, perhaps, of *The Feast of Fools*) that secular, politically-oriented theology is dead, having given way now to mysticism, spiritualism, celebration, mirth, fantasy, and festivity. Cox makes a firm case for both the inner and the outer quests as the dual task of American political theology: the quest for self-knowledge and the quest for social justice.

Michael Novak has something useful to say about the culturally-conditioned character of all theological reflection and discourse. He agrees that theology must somehow bring together personal authenticity and intelligent subjectivity, on the one hand, and a concern for social, economic, and political liberation, on the other. But if theology is to be engaged in more than pious rhetoric and empty admonitions, it must demonstrate a more exact grasp of the concrete, empirical meaning of its own language. (John G. Milhaven makes a similar appeal in his contribution to the volume.)

Richard Schaull and Herbert Richardson write about matters that have preoccupied them in recent years: revolution and sociotechnocracy. Schaull insists that revolution is not a passing phenomenon, but is demanded by the inner logic of Christian faith and the theology of John Calvin. Richardson suggests that, because faith in social technology is the distinctive feature of American culture, American theology will have to inquire into technology's development and employment.

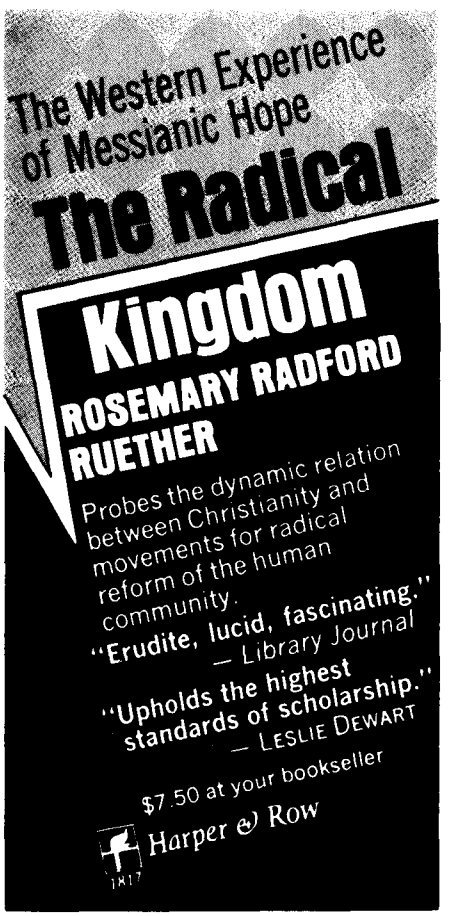
The most substantial and theologically sophisticated essay in this collection is Carl Braaten's "American Historical Experience and Christian Reflection." He argues, in the spirit of H. R. Niebuhr's classic study, *The Kingdom of God in America*, that the biblical notion of the Kingdom is crucial to an understanding of the development of American religious thought. "The idea of the kingdom of God as a lodestar of a theology of history reaches its high point in the theology of Walter Rauschenbusch," Braaten writes. "As the tides of neo-orthodox and existentialist theologies ebb away, we might do no better than to restore the doctrine of the kingdom of God to its place of centrality in systematic theology."

The Kingdom is the one reality which can connect the inner and the outer dimensions of Christian life and thought. The Kingdom is something within us and yet it also transforms our experience, our environment, and our history.

This collection contains several apparent differences of opinion, which the editors do not specifically acknowledge. It might have been helpful to have had these differences pointed out and some comment made upon them: the editors themselves do not agree with James Robinson on the American credentials of the death-of-God movement (pp. 16 and 162); Novak and Braaten offer conflicting comments on the Barth-versus-Bultmann debate (pp. 73-4 and 96-100); Christopher Mooney and Carl Braaten celebrate theology's future-orientation while Novak tends to deplore it as evasive (pp. 82-3); Robinson exalts language-hermeneutics as the key to theological exploration, while Braaten says it has to be incorporated within the larger horizon of history (p. 101) and Anthony Schillaci tends simply to exorcise language in an essay that tends too much to undercut the textual, historical, and systematic aspects of theological reflection (p. 174).

The chapters by Father Mooney and Dr. Braaten seem to overlap. As they stand, Braaten's could have displaced Mooney's. Schillaci's essay is unreasonably long (36 pages) and Patrick Rooney's case for an "educational theology" seems thin. Together these two articles occupy an inordinate amount of space. Finally, a more lucid, tightly organized introductory essay by the editors would have been welcome.

Nevertheless, the editors are to be commended for the planning and exe-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cution of this project. Most of the contributors are theologians of recognized competence and achievement and their articles, although more programmatic than substantive, are worth reading. For those who can afford only a quick look, I should recommend the essays by Braaten and Novak. In the spirit of the latter's essay, however, I should have to admit that this is itself a highly "conditioned" judgment.

Revolution And Church Christian Democracy, 1789-1901

HANS MAIER

University of Notre Dame Press, $10

JOSEPH L. WALSH

In the current intellectual climate—when the term "revolution" is the primary reference point for discussing social change everywhere, including the church—a historical study like this inevitably arouses the expectation: can we learn anything for the present from the earlier impact of revolutionary politics on the church?

First it must be said that Maier's work is essentially research in intellectual history, dealing with the emergence of political democratic thought in France in the 19th century. Its central thesis is that there is discernible continuity in French Catholic democratic thinking that reaches back to the revolutionary era of 1789, and that the democratic philosophy which eventually achieved semi-official Cathqlic approbation in the Christian Democratic parties was not an artificially engrafted ideology (as anti-clericals have claimed) but sprang from deep roots, albeit often covered over, in the Catholic tradition. Although there is a lengthy opening chapter on the formation of the Christian Democratic parties in more recent times, Maier is much more concerned with the emergence and flowering of a democratic philosophy among 19th century Catholics than he is with discussing the development of this philosophy in the semi-official Catholic parties of the 20th century.

Most informative is Maier's detailing of the close cooperation between significant numbers of churchmen and the leaders of the political opposition in the early stages of the French Revolution. Effectively countering the still prevalent identification of the church during the revolution with its tottering aristocratic hierarchy, Maier summarizes the available research showing local priests often to be the leaders of the opposition to the regime in the countryside and in the revolutionary assembly. Furthermore he surveys the theoretical formulation of this opposition in the thought of Abbé Fauchet, Abbé Gregoire and Marquis Nicolas de Bonneville. Early in the revolution, these men proposed a Catholic philosophy of democracy, deeply influenced by their reading of Rousseau, which looked to the creation of a new social order in which the power of a democratic church would unite with the new democratic state to create a better society than any yet seen.

According to Maier, French Catholic democratic thinking from Fauchet and Gregoire to Lamennais, Ozanam and the socialist Buchez (Catholic at least in sympathy) has always advocated a total renovation of society based on a religious revival among the people at large. He correctly argues, however, that this utopian stress on the "religio-political unity of society" was never taken over in the church's qualified endorsement of Christian democracy under Pope Leo XIII or by the pragmatically-oriented Christian Democratic parties in Europe in later years. Indeed, Maier is at his weakest in asserting, without demonstration, that there is any link between the ideas whose origins he analyzes so well and subsequent 20th-century Catholic political and social thought.

It is possible that 19th-century French Catholic democratic thought may be of importance today not because of the influence it exercised, but because of that which it did not. Maier describes the failure of the Catholic democratic thinkers ever to win significant adherents among the working classes, but offers no analysis of why this should have been so, even though it was the "common man" whose improvement was the professed aim of their new society. He perhaps gives us a clue, however, in suggesting that the underlying element in thinkers as diverse as Lamennais, Buchez and Ozanam is primarily "the state of uncertainty and crisis" created by the French Revolution and "a sense of general political instability, a foreboding of catastrophes" in 1789 and 1848. In this description we find less a sense of commitment to improving the condition of the impoverished than an ideological worldview to relieve the anxieties of the middle-class intellectuals facing on uncertain future. It is perhaps possible that the workers sensed in these Catholic democrats more of a commitment to the coherent idea of a totally renewed society than to the actual relieving of the misery of the urban workers in a representative democracy dominated by farmers and merchants.

Elitist theoreticians would of course explain the failure of the workers to respond to the vision of the early Christian democrats simply in terms of an inherent inability of the lower classes to rise above narrow, materialistic self-interest and grasp the lofty spiritual ideals offered them by these Catholic intellectuals. But such an analysis ignores the fact that at the very moment that these Catholics were failing to be heard, the utopian vision of workingmen's cooperatives and syndicalist decentralization was striking deep roots which have endured to this day among Paris workers.

Living as we do in a period similar in certain respects to the revolutionary era in 18th- and 19th-century France, it is important for us to be aware of the trap into which these Catholic, and other ideologues, fell at that time. In a period of revolutionary change, different segments of the society tend to create visions of a possible future which have the appearance of a universality which is in fact spurious and which is irrelevant to the fundamental needs of the whole society at that time. Today, at least in the United States, we find intellectuals offering as Christianity's social vision, a Teilhardian future of

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totally self-actualized, sensitized and playful individuals while much of the world starves and even in our own country 46 percent of its families live on less than $6,000 income per year. It is probable that historians a hundred years from now will judge today's version of what Maier calls "sociological Catholicism" to have been as irrelevant to the true needs of humanity as was early Christian democracy in its time. One wonders further whether a Christianity truly dedicated to a social order guaranteeing justice for all would not only be historically more relevant, but indeed a contemporary source of the authentic liberation and "enjoyment" which the affluent upper-middle classes now, as then, so desperately seek.

The Great American Jackpot

HERBERT GOLD

Random House, $6.95

IRVING MALIN

Herbert Gold uses two epigraphs for his novel. The first is a dialogue from *Crime and Punishment*:

> "I am going to foreign parts, brother."
>
> "To foreign parts?"
>
> "To America."
>
> "America?"
>
> Svirdrigailov took out the revolver and cocked it. Achilles raised his eyebrows.
>
> "This is not the place for such jokes."

The second is the Motto of California: "Eureka, I Have Found It!" Both epigraphs are fascinating. The first informs us that America is "foreign" and unreal—a country of jokes. The second clashes with Dostoyevskian, obscure conversation; it suggests that America is serious, substantial, a *real* goal which can and must be found. The conflicting epigraphs, then, refuse to be straightforward—they laugh at convention, stability, "law and order." They are criminal.

The novel emphasizes the theme and style of the epigraphs. It presents us with a typical student—his parents own a travel agency in Southern California—who wants to live the American dream. Al Dooley is free, white and under thirty. He can easily achieve success, especially after his sinus condition keeps him out of service. But how should he go about it? Through the study of "relevant" sociology? Through marriage? Through drugs? Wherever he turns, he finds craziness, masquerade, emptiness. The jackpot vanishes. "And Al, who really needed a break in the perfect floating of his life, had been set free because of a cloud in his sinus which he never even noticed in this climate."

His new freedom is "funny." Without an obstacle to block him—he has no racial or sexual obsession—Al has to create one. He must find *something* to become *someone*. He runs; he's "jumpy"—to use Gold's word. Finally he decides on his career; he will rob a bank. (Thus he joins such folk heroes as Willie Sutton and Bonnie and Clyde.) But Al doesn't know how to join the brotherhood of crime. He merely acts; he runs into a bank, steals $16,000 only to learn later that the money is in crisp, marked, useless bills. A failure!

His luck changes. After he is caught, Al begins to assume a new role. He is the mixed-up *hero*. Newspapers wonder about him. Psychiatrists are intrigued. Yippies admire his prankish assault upon the system. He becomes not one person but a *multitude*. He is, ironically, the dream (or nightmare) for others. They gleefully shout "Eureka, We Have Found Him!"

They have not. Al continues his prison-wait, wanting to flee from society into the majestic world of San Quentin. *He will work in the Chapel.* Martyrdom is appealing. But he is foiled once again. He is set free—he is "Not Guilty by Virtue of Jumpiness!" He is back where he started—on the American merry-go-round. And yet in this world of whirling madness, he finds happiness in a conventional ending as he pushes through the crowd with Sue Cody, his girl. They leap into an old hearse and drive on. To what?

Obviously, Al is a stereotyped graduate student, freaky, too serious or not serious enough. His girl friends are also stylized. So is his mentor-father-friend-enemy, Dr. Jared Howe, the black professor who fights the system he joins. The characters are so unbelievable that they manage to reveal all. They resemble the devastating cartoons we get from Nathanael West. Their troubled minds reflect the lunacy we call sanity. They are our brothers and sisters; they are, indeed, our jokes.

Gold's style captures—or, better yet, establishes—the stylized frenzy of his caricatures. It moves rapidly from high to low, from the metaphysical to the physical. It carefully creates the San Francisco environment as it destroys places and institutions. It is narcissistic—"look Ma, I'm writing!"—but it also loves the wild gestures of others. It is purposefully flashy.

> "Hilda, thank you," he muttered to the hand fetishist waiting to receive his money. The coin leapt like a trout into the hand, the red light flashed green and

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April, 1970

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spelled THANK YOU correctly; he was on the bridge. The heat of the day was bringing billows of ocean fog in through the Golden Gate, heaving softly up the bare hills, causing a sudden chill. The Volkswagen shuddered and he held the wheel more tightly. High above the spinning water, he felt the thrill of achievement; he kept the car on the road, along with hundreds of thousands of other motoring Californians. He kept his economy car on the swaying bridge, despite his temptation to fly through the screen of supporting cables, down through pillows of fog, into the blue and green and sun-speckled water.

The style embraces the slangy "Hiya," and the sudden metaphysical "chill"; it strains to assert itself (as does Al Dooley) against the tight restrictions of formal prose. Using such words as "heaving," "shuddered," "motoring," "supporting," "leapt," it willfully vibrates. It incarnates the basic premises of the novel—*keep moving; don't settle for easy roles; play!*

Gold reminds us that he is a gifted writer once he escapes from cozy nostalgia (*Fathers*) or glib clichés (*The Optimist*). He is at his best here—a fresh, jumpy and biting metaphysician.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 331)

Israel." But when he demands that we "come to grips, and quickly, with the *fact* of Palestinian nationalism," I wonder if he is in earnest. Arafat's kind of nationalism seeks to murder the Jewish state. My doubts are enforced by several "quarter truths" in his article.

1) "Though the British did not colonize Palestine themselves, they made it possible for the Zionists to do so more easily." Mr. Fox has an unusual way of handling facts. Jewish pioneers settled in Palestine before the Mandate; during the Hitler era, Great Britain obstructed the immigration of Jews. These facts make "more easily" sound not only ironical but cruel.

If Mr. Fox uses "colonize" in its widest sense, he is right. The pioneers turned deadly swamps into productive land, they planted trees where there had been nothing but erosion. In years of toil, they freed the acres they had purchased from Arabs, at no mean price, of stones and rocks that had been choking the soil.

If "colonize" is taken in its usual sense, the Jewish settlers were the opposite of the French *colons* in Algeria. They were not lords making the native population work for them. The *chalutzim*, the "pioneers," held and lived by, the truth that only their own, and not anyone else's, labor could redeem the land and renew their souls.

2) "The Palestinians . . . fled eastward, in fear of both Israeli terrorism and the clashing Arab and Israeli armies." Not all the Palestinians fled in 1947-48. There are still many Arab villages and towns in Israel. Furthermore, not all Arabs living under the

A True Revolutionary

IT IS NOT the task of the Christian leader to go around nervously trying to redeem people, to save them at the last minute, to put them on the right track. Man is redeemed, once and for all. The call of the Christian leader is to help man to affirm this great news, and to make visible in the daily events, the fact that behind the dirty curtain of his painful symptoms there is something great to be seen: The face of Him in Whose image he is shaped. In this way the contemplative can be a leader for a convulsive generation because he can break through the vicious circle of immediate needs asking for immediate satisfaction and can direct the eyes of those who want to look at what is beyond their impulses and lead their erratic energy into creative channels.

Here we see that the future Christian leader in no way can be considered as a man who is just concerned about individuals asking help in adapting themselves to their demanding world. In fact, the Christian leader who is able to be a critical contemplative will be a revolutionary in the most real sense. Because by testing all he sees, hears and touches on their evangelical authenticity, he is the man who is able to change the course of history and lead his people away from the panic-stricken convulsions to the creative action which will make for a better world.

He does not pick up every protest sign to be in with those who express their frustration more than their ideas, nor will he easily join those asking for more protection, more police, more discipline and more order. . . . More than anything else he will look into the reality of the concrete situation in which he finds himself, for signs of hope and promise.

—from Henry Nouwen: "Generation Without Fathers"
Commonweal, June 12, 1970

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Mandate were native Palestinians. Jewish presence led to increased immigration of Arabs so that the Arab population trebled. Finally, the terrorism of Irgun—the bane of official Zionism—was directed against the mandatory power, not the native Arabs.

Why does Mr. Fox suppress the fact that the Israelis begged the native Arabs to stay? In the Declaration of Independence, Israel's leaders pleaded: "We appeal—in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months—to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions."

3) Neither does Mr. Fox mention that the United Nations plan foresaw a Jewish and an Arab state; that the neighboring Arab governments smashed this plan by their war on Israel; that Transjordan illegally annexed what today is called the West Bank, without giving the Palestinians a say in the matter, indeed ruthlessly suppressing all opposition. Hence, if Palestinians have been deprived of their independence, it is not the fault of the Jews.

Does Mr. Fox hope to influence the Israelis by his panegyric of the invincible Al Fatah? Why does he not try his art of persuasion on Nasser and King Hussein who repudiated the cease-fire agreement? Why is he silent about Russian interference, the most mortal danger threatening Israel?

I wonder whether the editors of *Commonweal* realize their responsibility in printing Mr. Fox's article at this very moment? I trust their readers will not listen to the bewitching tunes of Al Fatah and the New Left.

(MSGR.) JOHN M. OESTERREICHER
Judaeo-Christian Studies Institute
Seton Hall University

The Basic Lonergan

Bronx, N. Y.

To the Editors: I believe that Michael Novak in his article "The Lonergan Explosion" [May 29] misrepresents Lonergan's thought on a basic issue. Since the issue is very important for theology and a point where I consider Fr. Lonergan's thought especially illuminating, I would like to register my objection.

The issue is whether you critically ground religion. Lonergan's answer is very simply, no. Religion is total commitment, it is "being in love with God," it depends on conversion which is personal and existential. It doesn't need critical grounding any more than a man's love for his wife and children needs grounding.

Novak calls this line of reasoning on Lonergan's part an "unaccustomed refuge in flight from understanding." I find this accusation difficult to understand in light of other points made in the article.

Commenting on criticisms made of Lonergan's proofs in *Insight* Novak says, "In *Insight*, human understanding is presented too nakedly, in a context too remote from that of actual moral and intentional conversions which support, in concrete life, the affirmation of God."

The experiential context of language about God is important; Lonergan admits that. And when he spoke of being in love with God he was speaking of that context. But Novak seems to have missed the point. He treats the context as if it were a step in the argument. He notes that Lonergan's critics find this step and the further steps in the argument "messier, more problematic and far less conclusive than he." The proof *is* messy if the context is taken as one of the steps. But it isn't. Being in love is the concrete condition which makes the steps make personal sense.

Novak's charge of flight from understanding is especially hard to accept in light of his basic criticism of Lonergan, that Lonergan's weak point has been in "the experimental, tangible, even densely imaginative sides of human culture." Saying that being in love does not need critical grounding is pointing out precisely what is peculiar in the experimental and tangible, that it proves itself. It is because being in love belongs to that side of life which Novak thinks Lonergan neglects that it does not need critical grounding.

Personally, I am grateful to Lonergan for light in exactly the area where Novak finds him taking flight from understanding. Lonergan said at the congress: "Being in love is fact, and it's what you are, it's existential. And your living flows from it. It's the first principle as long as it lasts." I find that illuminating.

PETER B. ELY, S.J.
Fordham University

"SENATOR COOPER and Senator Church/ Couldn't care less about who's in the lurch./ Rather like Senator Borah, they think/ Foreign entanglements lead to the brink/ (Always excepting entanglements we're/ Knitting together with Golda Meir)./ Nevertheless, for their push to reclaim/ Some of the Senate's eroded good name,/ Let us applaud! We've been holding the fort/ Ever since Franklin tried packing the Court."

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